

June 18, 1996

Mr. Dick Diotte, Director of Community Relations  
Crandon Mining Company  
P.O. Box 336  
Crandon, WI 54520-0336

RE: Radiation issues and the core shed visit

Dear Mr. Diotte:

I wish to comment on an article of yours that appeared in the May 27, 1996 edition of the Pioneer Express which may have misled the readers regarding the issue of potential radioactive materials being present at the proposed Crandon Mine Site and EPA's stance on this issue. In the May 27, 1996 edition of the Pioneer Express, in Crandon Mining Company's "You Asked" question and answer column, the question "Are there economic quantities of uranium in the Crandon ore body?" was asked. The response explained that there are no economic quantities of uranium in the ore and in fact, no values higher than background quantities were found. The response mentioned how independent studies by the Wisconsin State Geological and Natural History Society confirmed the background readings. Also, the response stated that recently, representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Corps of Engineers, Department of Interior, Environmental Protection Agency and several native American tribes visited the core shed and again identified only background quantities during their random inspection of the core samples from underground. The response, while not false as stated, was misleading in that it seemed to imply that the Environmental Protection Agency, among others (for which I can not speak) present at a recent Crandon core shed visit, was satisfied that all the cores associated with the proposed mining site contained nothing more than background levels or harmless levels of radiation.

As a point of clarification, that being EPA's first visit to the core shed, we were not there to determine the presence or absence of radioactive materials but to simply view typical site cores as EPA geologists requested and to scope out the core material available within the building so that if any future work would be needed, we would be familiar with what was in the core shed. While some parties at the core shed visit did have radiation detectors, and found only low to no detections of radioactivity, only a very small portion of the core was requested for viewing by the participants. In order to determine if the cores contain quantities of radiation that would be of a human health or environmental concern, not just economic quantities, a more in-depth investigation requiring the auditing of a larger statistical percentage of the cores than was performed during the May 8th, 1996 core shed visit would most likely be necessary. As you know, EPA is in the process of gathering available data on this issue and will determine if more information, such as a core audit, is needed to address this concern. The EPA can not speak for the other agencies or the Tribes that were present during the visit to the core shed, but until the EPA review of the available material is completed, the EPA does not have a stance on this issue.

Also, your question asked only about economic quantities and not about possible levels of radiation that could be of a concern to human health or the environment. The difference in economic quantities vs levels of radioactivity which can be of health/environmental concerns can be very different. Simply stating that no readings were found above background does not fully

answer health and environmental concerns. In addition, you did not ask about other radioactive materials such as thorium, radon or other radioactive yielding materials that may be of a human health or environmental concern. The EPA and other involved agencies must look at all the potential affects of mining to human health and the environment and not just if a mineral is economically viable to mine. These are some of the concerns that EPA will be looking into during its ongoing review of this issue.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact me at (312) 886-7252.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Cozza, Crandon Mine Project Manager  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

cc:

Bill Tans, WDNR  
Dave Ballman, COE  
Ron Spry, U.S. FWS  
Jim Krohelski, U.S. GS  
Herb Nelson, U.S. BIA  
John Griffin, Mole Lake  
Llewellyn Boyd, Menominee  
Mark Kuester, U.S. BIA  
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John Koss, Menominee  
Ken Fish, Menominee  
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